

thursday evening series

GABRIELI QUARTET

Kenneth Sillito, *violin*
Brendan O'Reilly, *violin*
Ian Jewel, *viola*
Keith Harvey, *cello*

November 13th, 1975 at 8:30 p.m.
Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building

Quartet in G, Op. 77, No. 1

Haydn

Allegro moderato

Adagio

Menuetto (Presto)

Finale (Presto)

During the last years of the eighteenth century, Franz Joseph Haydn continued to hold the attention of the European audience with the genius of his music. Between the completion of the well-known oratorio *The Creation* in 1798 and that of *The Seasons* in 1801, Haydn composed a number of superb chamber works which have remained in the standard repertoire. The Quartet in G exemplifies the excellence of this segment of Haydn's oeuvre.

The dance-like opening of the Allegro Moderato is based on a brief motive identified by its dotted note pattern. The exchange of this idea between the two violins and later between violin and cello has a particular charm which is exploited throughout the movement. The elegance of this triadic melody is matched with a graceful secondary theme accompanied by smooth, flowing triplets.

The intensity of emotion suggested by the strong unison statement which begins the slow movement gradually eases with the introduction of long, delicate melodies played by the first violin. The initial theme is frequently echoed by the individual voices within subtly altered textures. As the movement unfolds, the composer creates a vision of peaceful tranquillity which excludes all but the most gentle tensions.

The Presto marking of the Minuet and vigour of the melodies clearly foreshadow the style of Beethoven's scherzos. The distinctiveness of the Minuet is largely derived from the effective displacement of accents. The Trio provides a satisfying contrast through the establishment of a new tonal centre, E flat, and through the sudden changes in dynamic levels.

Within this string quartet the Finale is the least concerned with introspection. The clarity and lightness of texture augment the impression of delicacy found in the lilting melodies. The momentum of the movement never wanes in this brief rush to an exciting conclusion.

Three Studies from String Quartet, Op. 34

Gordon Crosse

Gordon Crosse, one of the foremost of the young generation of English composers, wrote these studies for the Gabrieli Quartet in 1972. The first is entitled *Recitativo* and features the viola with a solo voice. The second is an aria for violin set against a pizzicato

cello with murmuring second violin and viola. The third is a more extended movement for the whole ensemble in which the composer has brilliantly explored a great range of rhythmical structures and delicately shaded sonorities. Almost the whole study is played "Consordino".

Mr. Crosse, who is composer-in-residence at King's College, Cambridge, has to his credit three operas, two symphonies, concertos and chamber music.

The Bullfighter's Prayer

Turina

Joaquin Turina's "La ocasion del torero" involves a colourful reconciliation of the spirit of Spanish music with procedures of composition associated with the modern French school. The work dates from 1926 — twelve years after Turina had returned to Spain from his studies with Vincent d'Indy in Paris.

This short work is a single movement quartet which attempts to evoke the atmosphere of the Toreador's prayer. Four different melodic sections are easily distinguished through the changes in tempi: Allegro moderato, Andante, Allegretto mosso and Lento. The thematic material is not developed but is repeated with little variation in the order of presentation.

The confusion of French and Spanish elements can be seen throughout the work. The mixture of modal melodies and Spanish rhythms with the rich harmonies of the French school create an unusual, but convincing sound.

*** * INTERMISSION * ***

Quartet in A flat major, Op. 105

Dvorak

Adagio, ma non troppo- Allegro appassionato

Molto vivace

Lento e molto cantabile

Allegro non tanto

Among the fourteen string quartets composed by Antonin Dvorak, the late works, Opus 105 and 106, are generally considered to represent the height of his achievement. Both quartets were completed in December of 1895 after a relatively long period of inactivity when Dvorak recovered from his last trip to America. Due to the popularity of his chamber music, the quartets were published in the following year.

The opening figure of the Adagio ma non troppo immediately creates an atmosphere of impending tragedy. The mood is sustained through the sudden changes of dynamics and the chromaticism of the minor harmonies. Although the mood is brightened in the Allegro appassionato, the entire movement is permeated with an underlying sombreness. Dark colours predominate with only occasional glimpses of the lighter side of the musical palette.

The main thematic material of the first movement juxtaposes an animated, extrovert melody derived from the slow introduction with a lyrical, expressive theme. The latter idea, typified by a falling seventh, interjects a sense of tranquillity between passages of passionate intensity. The development of these melodies is masterful in its exploration of changing levels of dramatic tension.

The second movement provides a striking reminder of Dvorak's heritage. The frequent shifts of rhythmic accents in triple meter and the general vivacity of the themes are characteristic of the Bohemian dance known as the furiant. Both Dvorak and his compatriot Bedrich Smetana consistently employed this dance to re-create the sound of their native folk music. It is interesting to note that the contrasting middle section of this movement is directly related to Dvorak's opera The Jacobean which dates from 1887-88.

The Lento e molto cantabile is a study of simple melodic variation. The modification of the long-breathed themes is coupled with changes in scoring and the addition of new counterpoints. Gradually the movement builds to an agitated climax and then returns to a peaceful dialogue between the violins and the lower strings.

The Allegro non tanto is close in spirit to the second movement. Although its lively, buoyant character is tempered by occasional passages of a more introspective nature, the finale constitutes an optimistic conclusion to the cycle. (Notes by W. Bowen)

Next Event: Monday, November 17th, 1975 at 8:30

Aaron Copland 75th Birthday Tribute. Leo Smit, piano, State University of New York at Buffalo; members of Cleveland String Quartet and University of Toronto Concert Choir, conductor: Charles W. Heffernan

**Next Thursday Evening Series: January 22nd, 1976 at 8:30
Contemporary Chamber Ensemble from
New York**